

What is the distinctive contribution of local ordained ministry to the church's p...



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## Introduction

I will begin this reflective essay by looking at what Scripture says about ordination. I will then move on to discuss Ordained Ministry and Local Ordained Ministry followed by my conclusion.

### Ordination in Scripture

In the Bible, the word “ call” refers to God’s initiative to bring people to Christ and to participate in his redemptive work in the world. This sense of calling is especially prominent in the letters of Paul, whether or not the word “ call” is actually used.

According to Milton, God calls every living creature to live according to His law; to live a life of service to Him and our fellow man. This is known as “ God`s general call”. A second type of call is known as the “ effectual call”, where the Holy Spirit improves on the general call until salvation. This is received by those who turn to Christ in faith. The third call is a “ technical call”. This is a call to some type of particular “ Kingdom” work. (Milton, 2017)

The general call is sometimes known as the Gospel call and occurs wherever the Gospel is preached:

*“ Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.”* Isaiah 45: 22

*“ I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”* Luke 5:

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The effectual calling is often known as “irresistible grace,” Paul writes about this type of call in Philippians 2: 13:

*“It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil His good purpose”*

Jesus shows how important this call is in John 6: 44:

*“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them.”*

1 Peter 2: 5 tells us that believers collectively are a “holy priesthood”.

Romans 12: 1-8 Corinthians 12: 7-10 tell us that we all have different gifts including spiritual gifts which can equip us for ministry. Ecclesiastically “ordain” means “to invest with ministerial or priestly authority.” This word was not used in the New Testament but it was the same action. Paul and Barnabas were set apart for special ministry in Acts 13: 1-5 and in Acts 14: 23 they appointed leaders who were set apart or ordained as elders of churches. Titus was told to appoint leaders in every town in Crete. Paul’s letters to Titus and Timothy (1 and 2) gave a criteria for the selection of the leaders. The Church of England today has its own selection criteria.

### Ordained Ministry

The word Deacon is from the Greek “Diakonas” which means “servant”. At the beginning of the “Ordination to Deacon” service the Bishop tells us that in order to serve the “royal priesthood” there are many ministries

(Ephesians 4: 12) and that *“Deacons are ordained so that the people of God may be better equipped to make Christ known. Theirs is a life of visible self-*

*giving. Christ is the pattern of their calling and their commission; as he*  
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*washed the feet of his disciples, so they must wash the feet of others.*" (The Church of England, 2019)

All priests are first ordained Deacon and continue to be Deacons even after they are ordained priest a year later. Some deacons however are permanent Deacons. Although Deacons are ordained they are not authorised to carry out blessings or absolutions or to preside at the Eucharist. It can be thought that all priests remain a Deacon to remind them they must have a servant heart, that they are a sign of Christ like service.

At the beginning of the Ordination to Priest service the Bishop says:

*" Priests are ordained to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel. They share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church, delighting in its beauty and rejoicing in its well-being. They are to set the example of the Good Shepherd always before them as the pattern of their calling. With the Bishop and their fellow presbyters, they are to sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament, that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ and be a living sacrifice acceptable to God." (The Church of England, 2019).*

The introductions to both the Deacon and Priest's Ordination Service give the bare bones of the role of the Priest and the Declarations later on the service expand on this more.

The term " shepherds among the people" used often in the Ordination service is a very apt description which has been used right back during Biblical times where the sheep usually represent the people and the

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Shepherd the leader - sheep need a shepherd, people need leaders. The ordination service today calls upon priests to continue in this theme. Every congregation needs a leader to organise the activities of the church including corporate worship, fellowship, prayer, evangelism and communion. This needs to be done in a strong but unassuming way:

*“ 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock”. (1Peter 5: 3)*

Being a leader in the church should be seen as a service rather than a position of power following Jesus example . He “ did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Leaders must be servants (Matt 20: 25-28).

Priests are to share leadership and be collaborative. In Acts 13: 2-3 Paul took Barnabas with him and the New Testament talks about elders in churches. In the Old Testament Moses was taught about the importance of delegation. Jesus delegated to His apostles and they in turn delegated to the six “ Deacons” (Acts 6: 1-7). This can help prevent Priests trying to do everything themselves because they feel responsible or become perfectionists maybe due to pride or ambition.

Delegating allows the Priest to concentrate on reflecting on and ministering God’s word and can protect the church. It is important not to “ burn out” (Exodus 19: 17-18) It can help build up the church. We all have gifts which are essential for the well-being and growth of the church (Ephesians 4: 11-16) One person may have more than one gift but no person will have them all. Delegation increases the churches mission. Jesus delegated authority to <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-the-distinctive-contribution-of-local-ordained-ministry-to-the-churchs-participation-in-gods-mission/>

the disciples. In Matthew 28 (The Great Commission) Jesus sent people out into the world to make disciples. This type of delegation helps others to grow and then they will be able to delegate to others and the growth will spread.

An Ordained Priest should have a deep personal relationship with God and lead by example. The priest calls the people to prayer, serves and comforts, preaches and teaches. They will need knowledge of and a strong faith in the word of God and his teachings. Being able to communicate ideas with humour and insight is beneficial. Patience and empathy will be needed to enable them to be able to support those in need, sick or dying and to help their flock resist temptations.

A vital part of the role of the priest is administering the sacraments. The sacraments are a visible sign of spiritual grace. They include: baptism – when someone is baptised their sins are forgiven and they become part of God's family; communion – where God is present; and absolution and blessings – where sins are forgiven and where the bestowing of God's good will is asked for.

To summarise all Ordained Ministry should discover and nurture the gifts of the laity and order the sacramental life of the parish.

#### Local Ordained Ministry

Stipendiary, non-stipendiary and local ordained priests are all ministers of the word and sacrament and all receive the same ordination. There are many similarities to the role of an OLM to that of a Stipendiary priest (see above). However, Cocksworth and Brown state that depending on who you

and where you are and what responsibilities you have in life, your priestly ministry will look very different (Brown and Cocksworth, 2002)

Ordained Local Ministry (OLM) is distinctive in that OLM`s are called out from the community that they will serve (Parish - focuses ministry). In Act 6: 1-7 the church in Jerusalem chose the 7 men ( the first Deacons?) to minister to the widows from the same community the widows were from and the elders chosen in Acts 14: 23 were chosen from the local community.

What this ministry looks like is difficult to generalise as OLM`s are diverse. OLM`s are self supporting and many have secular part/ full time work and so hours offered for ministry can vary. Although the term OLM implies local what this means can also vary - parish, deanery, diocese?

As part of the community and OLM should know their " flock" very well and have a desire to evangelise to spread the " good news" of God's love for us. This will enable them to nurture and then to baptise new disciples. A love for the community is vital. Being able to communicate ideas with humour and insight is beneficial. Patience and empathy will be needed to enable them to be able to support those in need, sick or dying.

The ministry focus for an OLM is to further the mission of the local church being conscious of the needs and opportunities of that area and being an enabler of mission.

They represent the " whole" church to the local church and can be a means of communication between the local and wider church. This type of ministry can act as an example of the importance of mission to the local community

encouraging them to consider how they can help with God's mission and make the church grow and how they can help their own community. This also involves recognising and developing gifts in others and helping them to find their calling which I will enjoy and will be able to use relevant skills learnt from my secular work (Teaching Assistant)

*“ OLM clergy are often described by their local communities as ‘ one of us’ and are seen by many as the face of stability and continuity in a contrasting and changing world of ministry. They may take a lead in periods of vacancy and will need the kinds of skills and insights that will allow others to take a responsible role in the day to day running of the local church and model the partnership that has existed between local church community and candidate from the first moment of vocational awakening. It is important that this relationship is not lost the moment ordination arrives. In that sense it is always a leading from the ‘ grass roots. ”* (Ordained Local Ministry Guidelines, 2019)

OLM`s will not be incumbents but will nevertheless still have some form of leadership role in the local church and and possibly maybe, to some extent, in the local community. The OLM must be part of a local ministry team and is in fact a collaborative ministry working with others all sharing and using their gifts for the “ body” (Romans 12: 3-8). They may also work in other teams focused on certain aspects such as baptism, marriage teams or community groups such as Citizens Advice or local youth groups. The New Testament seems to imply a collaborative ministry. Acts 20: 17 refers to elders (not elder). There were overseers (plural) in Philippians 1: 1.



All Parishes are different and an OLM can help with the transition between incumbents by sharing knowledge of the community but also can be a constant familiar face to the community as they are unlikely to “ move on” (both of these points can also lead to problems such as the congregation not accepting the new priest for example but hopefully with care the issues can be resolved). It is important to work together:

*“ We make no stand for the replacement of stipendiary clergy by OLM`s. Rather we appeal for the recovery of the complementarity of apostolic and local ministries ...”(Bowden, Francis, Jordan and Simon, 2011).*

To summarise Ordained Local Ministry Priests should be part of and know their community well, having authentic relationships with them and be able to discover and nurture their gifts. As part of their role they should be able to share with the Incumbent the administering of the sacraments which I am looking forward to carrying out for my church family.

## Conclusion

I believe ordination is not about being better than anyone else, knowing everything about theology or about always being right. I believe it is about being a means of grace. Therefore I envisage my ministry once ordained as an OLM to be one foot in the church and one foot in the world. It is important to me to be part of the church, local community and my work community. Jesus was out in the world. I feel humbled and privileged to be able to have the opportunity to serve God this way. As an educator I see my role in the future as being one where I can be in the community teaching, nurturing, developing gifts and faith and also learning from those I work with and <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-the-distinctive-contribution-of-local-ordained-ministry-to-the-churchs-participation-in-gods-mission/>

minister to. This will help build up the community, individuals and congregation.

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